NAQCC News

Nov 17, 2007	NAQCC Web Site	Issue #058

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1. SPRINT: Our sprint is this Wednesday evening, Nov. 22nd at 8:30-10:30 PM EST (Thursday 0130-0330Z).

I think this is going to be an especially fun sprint if a lot of hams participate in competing for the special award. I hope you've designed and built your homebrew straight key. Tom WY3H and I have. I enjoy using mine so much, I've been using it for just about all of my QSO's since it was created about a month ago.

We're aware that our sprint takes place on 'Thanksgiving Eve'. We think that may give some members a chance to enter our sprints for the first time since many will be off work either Wednesday or Thursday, perhaps both. If you don't have to get up early Thursday, you can stay up a little later Wednesday evening. If you usually work late Wednesdays, but not this week, well... I'm looking forward to hearing a lot of new fists in this sprint.

Of course we are continuing our monthly giveaway of the CW books on CD donated by Chuck K7QO who also is including his wonderful CW learning/improvement course on CD. There are currently 12 books included in Chuck's offer valued over $100 normally but given free to the highest scorer who hasn't already won the CD's previously.

Then there are the usual 4 beautiful color certificates that go to our first place finishers in the SWA and Gain divisions (or first and second if we have entries in only one division), our Special Award certificate, and our Top Non-Winner certificate. As I hinted earlier, the Special Award certificate goes to the one submitting the highest score who used a homebrew straight key for the whole sprint. This idea came about back in September when Stan K4UK sent me a picture of a homebrew key he used in one of our sprints. As soon as I saw it, I thought "Now there's a great idea for a Special Award in one of our future sprints." Well the future is now and my idea triggered by Stan's picture has become reality.

When the sprint is over, please submit your results and log via our autologger. We've got it working perfectly no matter what browser/operating system you use.

If you use paper logging during the sprints, there's our log and summary form with instructions for you to download and fill in with your text editor to email to us or you can transfer the info to our autologger mentioned above.

If you use GenLog for the sprint, be sure to get the latest GenLog data file here. After the sprint, use the 'Log' menu - 'Write ASCII log [K3WWP.log]' selection to create your log, and submit the K3WWP.log file via the autologger, email, etc. Of course obviously your log will have your call in the menu choice and log file name, not K3WWP.

If you're entering one of our sprints for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. Last month we had 7 hams who submitted a log for the first time ever: N5KIP N0LNW NT0Z KD0V K0JEM K8BTD W0CH.

Full Sprint info here.

2. OCTOBER CHALLENGE RESULTS: This was a record for number of participants in a challenge as many folks had fun with our special event N3A station, either operating it or working it. We hope everyone understood that to satisfy our challenge it was necessary to specifically state in an email to us that they worked N3A. It was not sufficient to merely work the station even though a certificate and/or QSL was applied for. We had no intention of entering all 1,000 or so folks who worked N3A into the results and prize drawing.

Our giveaway of the bug/paddle handles donated by Gregg WB8LZG went to AB0SR whose call was selected in a drawing by Gregg from all who satisfied the challenge and did not opt out of the drawing. We are still waiting to hear from Jesse as to which set of paddles he would like. So Jesse, if you read this, please check your email for the info.

You can see examples of the handles on Gregg's web site.

See how Steve NU7T used his handles in the previous newsletter (#057) if you didn't catch it before.

Full challenge info including my tutorial/work sheet for our alphabet style challenges here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: - The N3A operation was a huge success despite horrible band conditions during the entire month of October. Our 16 operators of N3A racked up over 1,128 QSO's.

We don't have an exact total as we are awaiting a complete report from Bruce WY7N. He sent us a partial total in mid-October, but none since. Bruce just emailed and said he has been extremely busy with his job. When Bruce sends his report, we'll update our final N3A totals in a future newsletter and the special N3A page.

Here's a breakdown of what has been reported so far.

Total QSO's: 1,128
QSO's in contests: 710
Other QSO's: 322
2X N3A QSO's: 38
DX (non-W/VE) QSO's: 23

States worked: 45 (all but AK HI MT ND RI)
DX entities (including W/VE): 16 (CO DL EI FM GM HA HP J3 KP4 OH0 OM UR VE V3 W ZF)
By band:
160: 14
80: 283
40: 423
30: 31
20: 225
17: 3
15: 13
12: 0
10: 1

Pretty impressive especially when you consider all those QSO's were made with QRP near the depths of a sunspot cycle minimum. This is a long newsletter so I'll just end this item by reminding you that additional N3A info is all here including how to obtain a certificate and/or QSL if you haven't already applied for one, and we hope you have.

- We received wonderful news on November 8th. As of that date, the SKCC sprints will no longer interfere with our NAQCC sprints every other month. Thanks to Bill NT9K (the weekend SKCC sprint manager) and John AI4RE (the new SKCC weeknight sprint manager), the SKCC weeknight sprint has been permanently moved to the 4th Wednesday evening of every month beginning with what would have been the next conflicting month, December. All NAQCC officers and members salute these fine gentlemen and the SKCC for finally doing the right and honorable thing. As you probably know, our sprint schedule was established several months before the SKCC was even an idea in someone's head. Now just as the NAQCC moved its original sprint schedule back in early 2005 to avoid conflict with a previously established event, the SKCC has at last followed suit and done likewise.

- The winner of the QRP Transceiver Kit in our October sprint (Gregg WB8LZG) has decided that since he already has several QRP rigs for 40 meters, he is re-donating the kit to be given away again. He has also added a printout of the complete assembly instructions and an enclosure for the rig. To refresh memories, it's a Hendricks QRP transceiver kit, the DC40 for 40 meters. Thank you Gregg for your thoughtfulness. Here is how the giveaway works:

1) Email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** stating you are interested in winning the kit. The subject of the email should be "QRP kit" and the body of the email should state that you would like to win the kit and include your call and NAQCC number.

2) Make a combined total of at least 5 QSO's in our Dec 2007 and Jan 2008 sprints.

3) If you currently don't have any kind of HF rig at all with which to satisfy step 2, send a statement to that effect to the email address in step 1, and the QSO requirement in step 2 will be waived in your case.

All who thus qualify according to the three steps will be entered into a drawing near the end of January to select the winner.

Full giveaway info here.

- Have you ever taken a real good look at the pictures on the Gallery page in the Pictures section of the web site. I think the color pictures there of our members look just great. You all know how much I admire and help FISTS in any way that I can and this is not criticism of them at all, but I think compared to their B&W pictures in the Keynote, our color photos look so

much better. Well, except for one thing. The percentage of our members vs. the percentage of FISTS members who have contributed pictures is very much smaller. I encourage you to send us your picture for the gallery if you are not already represented there. If you're into digital photography, it is so very simple to do. Just take a picture of yourself and email it to us. Your face should be at least 120x120 pixels if you know about such things. If not, just make your face as large as possible. Large pictures reduce nicely, but small pictures look pretty bad after being enlarged in most cases. C'mon now, don't be bashful.

- The NAQCC has now entered its 4th year of operation, and we would like to take this time to offer "State of the NAQCC" messages from those of our officers who choose to make such a message.

Tom WY3H - NAQCC President - My oldest daughter describes our great hobby as "...going around 'beeping' at people." Indeed, I guess that pretty much sums up what we do, in a sense, so I'll begin by saying hello to all our fellow "beepers."

I was recently thinking back more than three years ago, to when I first met John, K3WWP. We formed a fast friendship. After a short time we decided to start an amateur radio club dedicated solely to CW and QRP operation.

I believe I am correct to say that little did we realize that a club that came to be known as the North American QRP CW Club would turn out to be the largest club in the world dedicated to QRP/CW operation. And more over, this is a club that encourages the use of straight keys and simple wire antennas.

To be quite frank, John and I thought that the club "might" generate enough interest to attract perhaps 50 or so members. Never, in our wildest imaginations did we think that the membership ranks of such an organization would grow to more than 2,000 (and still growing) members in all 50 states, all Canadian provinces and more than 40 foreign countries.

Recently the club, headquartered in Armstrong County Pennsylvania, was recognized and honored by the Armstrong County Commissioners who declared October, "North American QRP CW Club month in Armstrong County."

While analyzing some recent sprint results, John came to the realization that we have an active sprint participation that is second to none.

For the second consecutive year we have operated a special event station using the 1X1 call N3A. This year more than 1,100 radio amateurs worked N3A and we had at least one avid SWLer confirm hearing a station and ask for a QSL and certificate. (You can bet he'll receive both).

So, we might ask, why the club is such a great success.

I really don't have a pat answer for that, but for one, membership is free. Perhaps another reason is that the club award certificates (and there are many different awards available) are also free. We ask only for a small donation to cover printing, packaging and mailing. We have also, thanks to some unsolicited and very generous donations, given out several prizes during the past year to sprint winners - also free!

However, the big reason for the NAQCC's success is no doubt YOU - our members! I mean that. We have 2,000 plus voices testifying to the fact that CW is alive and well and that QRP works!

Personally, I wish to thank all those who operated N3A in various call areas. Thanks goes to each and every one of you who by your participation in NAQCC events, and by merely joining the club, have helped make it what it is today.

On a final note I would like to remind all of our members that there is no room nor is it the time for petty squabbles among different clubs that promote CW. Rather than building walls between clubs, let's build bridges. So whether you belong to the NAQCC, FISTS, QRP ARCI, or the Straight Key Century Club, or other organizations (If I forgot any it is purely unintentional) it's time to band together to show our support for CW and work to see that we do not lose more band space to other modes.

Happy anniversary to the NAQCC!

John K3WWP - NAQCC Vice President - I feel extremely pleased with the condition of the NAQCC overall. I believe we are now the largest QRP/CW club in the world with our 2090+ members. There are CW clubs and QRP clubs with larger memberships, but the CW clubs also include QRO operation and the QRP clubs also include modes other than CW.

Our flagship event, our monthly sprint has grown in stature from a minor little gathering of a few QRPers to become a major player among similar events of other clubs. Considering participation as a percentage of club membership, a random check of other organizations shows us to be well ahead of most of them. Perhaps only the ARS Spartan Sprints have a higher percentage of participation.

I believe our success is due to you, the members liking the low-key slower speed operation of our sprints. We try to keep them that way by the tactic of assigning a huge bonus multiplier to straight-key operation. Because of that, there is not the hectic helter-skelter atmosphere of other sprints, and there is a comfortable friendly feeling instilled in those operating our sprints.

Our monthly challenges, a concept unique to our club as far as I know, have been fairly successful and are starting to engender more and more comment and interest among members. While sprints have been around for a long time, our concept of monthly challenges is something new in ham radio, and often times new things take time to be accepted. That acceptance is coming along nicely now.

Our awards program is also starting to come along nicely. In fact as I write this, I'm waiting to process or have processed a WAS, an Alphabet Prefix, and a 1000MPW application that arrived in the last few days. Tom just told me he received a 30-30 award application as well. That's very encouraging. I am a little puzzled by the low interest in our Worked Members award. Such an award seems to be the mainstay of other clubs. Perhaps that will also pick up now, and will really move along nicely when propagation conditions on the bands improve for making QRP QSO's.

I am totally impressed by our N3A operation in October. I won't repeat stats here, but I feel our showing, considering all our QSO's were made using QRP and in many cases simple wire antennas, compares very favorably with other organizations' special events. Even those using QRO and big antenna farms when conditions were better than they were in October. Thanks to our 16 ops for a great job.

As for club finances, we are in good shape thanks to the generous donations of our members and the $3 fee we charge for most of our awards. However not only does the money come in, but it goes out as well. Stamps, paper, envelopes, ink cartridges, our vanity club call, special

items like the plaque we awarded to the first to 1,000 points in our 2XQRP award, and the like do cost money. Being in good shape financially right now does not necessarily guarantee it will continue that way. We need the occasional donation and a steady stream of award applications to keep us in the black.

Repeating again to sum up, I feel the overall state of the NAQCC is very good. We've more than achieved our purpose of promoting CW at QRP levels on the bands. Many of our members have mentioned that our club was the incentive they needed to get back to CW operation. They found that it was a mode with which they could succeed even at QRP levels. In many cases due to situations beyond their control, the only alternative they had to be able to operate was using QRP, CW, and simple wire antennas. The NAQCC showed them that this combination does work, and works very well.

Finally a huge thank you to each and every member. I am proud of every one of you for your dedication to not only the club, but QRP/CW in general.

Paul KD2MX - NAQCC Recruitment Officer & Member News Editor - It has been wonderful to watch the growth of the club over the past two years. I joined shortly after getting back on the air after a long absence and I have the NAQCC to thank for its many resources, events, and activities which helped me so much in discovering the joys of CW and QRP. I think others have likewise benefited and it is satisfying to know that I now play some small part in helping the club.

I encourage all members, new and old, to participate in some way over the next year in our many activities. You can try and complete the monthly challenges, enter the sprint, work towards one of the many awards, or just get on the air and maybe QRS for a newcomer. Sure conditions have been terrible these past months, and especially tough for QRP, but our signals can still travel the world and better days should lie ahead.

Few of us get to devote as much time to our hobby as we might like. I know my time has been limited lately. But most of us can find some time here and there to promote QRP and CW while enjoying their favorite activity, be it ragchewing, contesting, award chasing, QRPp, or all of the above. There's nothing better for our beloved hobby than a band full of cw signals.

I trust that we will see continued growth and interest over the next year. While it is great to see new members sign up, it is fantastic to actually meet them during or after a sprint, or see their call listed as a participant in one of our club's activities. That is the true indication that we are being successful in promoting CW and QRP.

72 to all, Paul/kd2mx

- If you have a web site, a listing on QRZ or other Internet presence, we hope you are proudly displaying your NAQCC number with a link to the NAQCC site. It may be hard to believe with all our publicity efforts that there are still some dedicated QRP/CW ops who don't know about the club and your info may lead them to us. Be sure also to include your NAQCC membership number in your ham-related email (and regular mail) signature(s). Should you want something a little more fancy, our logo is available in different sizes for download here.

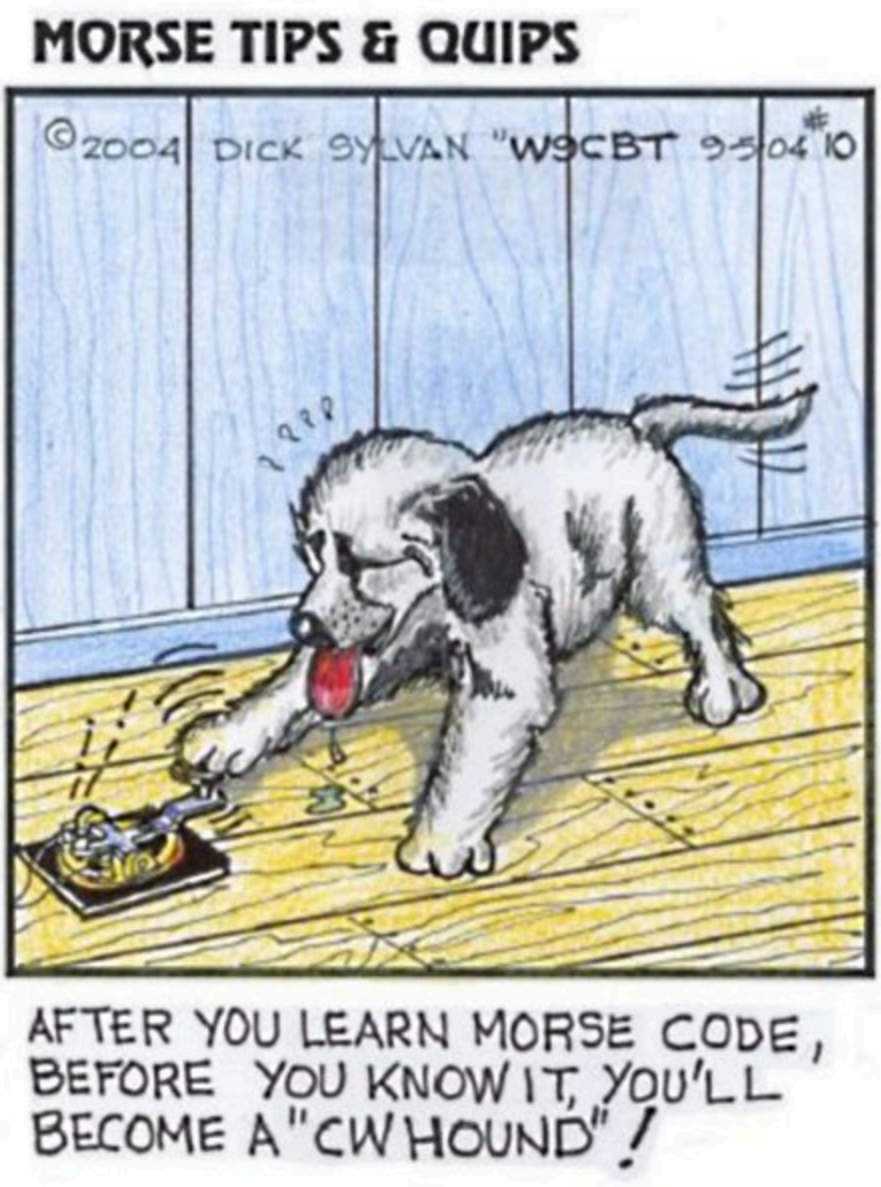
Then of course don't forget your QSL card (including your eQSL card.) That's another place to display your NAQCC number.

- To check the current status of all the giveaways the NAQCC has going, see here and make plans now for what you are going to try to win.

- Finally, and this may be considered picky by some, and I even sort of think that myself, but the NAQCC is a CLUB, not a GROUP. It's not the NAQCG. Ham radio organizations have traditionally been called clubs, and sometimes societies. Groups tend to be associated with Internet organizations, e.g. Yahoo groups, and the like. The NAQCC is a ham radio organization, not an Internet organization. We only use the Internet for dispersing info about our club via the web site, newsletter, or direct email. When it comes to communication among members that can be done via ham radio, we urge our members to do so. Only by using CW and ham radio, can we preserve those modes of communication. If you just plain feel like talking to someone, get on the air and call CQ or answer someone's CQ, don't head off to an Internet chat room or forum. The Internet is in great health. Ham radio is starting to show its age, and needs our help to keep it going, especially its CW aspect. So please refer to us as a club, not a group so folks will think ham radio, not Internet. Thanks.

4. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH: A couple weeks ago we added a very talented ham to our membership roster, Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he has offered to supply a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to become the third organization to feature Dick's cartoons in their publications. Dick's cartoons appear monthly in The K9YA Telegraph, an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine and also in RadCom Magazine, the British Ham Radio publication. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site at http://www.k9ya.org/w9cbt/

A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our 'before the sprint' newsletters. Those are the ones with the even numbers, and since this is #058 it's time now to show you the first of Dick's cartoons and let you get a chuckle from it before we continue with the news.



Thanks very much, Dick. We know many members will be looking forward to this new newsletter feature each month from now on.

5. MEMBER NEWS: Thanks to your news submissions, this is becoming a very popular section of the newsletter. We hope you will continue telling us of your QRP/CW doings and including the wonderful pictures as well. Remember we only accept POSITIVE news here unlike the TV newscasts. There is so much that is wonderful going on in the world, it's a shame only the negative is emphasized in so many places.

Send your news items to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**.

- **From Neal, W3CUV #1787** - I went on a four day solo backpack trip in the Allegheny National Forest in mid September and took my MFJ-9040. Then in mid-October we did a picnic table portable trip to MK Goddard state park here in PA. That's my friend Bob, W3BBO and his K-2 in the pix (bottom row). Operating QRP outdoors sure is a lot of fun as you know.

- **From Ivin, W9ILF #1400** - The NAQCC November challenge is to spell Thanksgiving words using call letters from QSOs using QRP. Spelling these words was a lot of fun.

I started Friday evening and ended Sunday. John's (K3WWP) grid system made it much easier to keep track of what letters I still needed and then it was just hunting the bands to find them. The QSOs led to many operators being surprised that I was getting out QRP and some even dropped their power to see if they were getting out as well, and yes many were.

My 10-year-old daughter Sadie got involved helping to keep track of what I still needed. We both really got into it and had fun together. We drew up John's grid system and started keeping track together to see what we still needed. We kept comparing to make sure we agreed on what was completed and then I would hunt for more. She isn't a ham and doesn't know code, but it will just be a matter of time I hope. It was as good as doing a crossword puzzle together.

It really was a fun weekend hunting for the right call letters to finish the puzzle I was working on. I was frantically moving up and down the bands searching for someone calling CQ with the letters I needed and then hoping they would hear me. I tried calling CQ, but this resulted in QSOs with letters I didn't need, so I would talk awhile and then try to end things so I could move on with my pursuit! hi hi hi...

Another challenge was slowing down to QSO with someone I wouldn't normally listen for, but needed their call so bad! That led to some very nice chats. My last QSO, with K7AMS, was out in the state of WA, a good distance from Indiana and I tail-ended his previous QSO hoping he would hear my 5 watts and vertical antenna. Sure enough, it was a little rough and the time before he answered was excruciating, but when he came back to me it was FANTASTIC! He was also very surprised my QRP was making it and wished me luck. I had a very nice time!

Doing this challenge on a weekend with little contesting going on was a much larger challenge, but this added to the excitement of continuing to hunt for just the right call. A fun challenge like this really keeps me excited and looking forward to getting on the air.

- **From John, K3WWP #0002** - It is so very rewarding to find out you've done something to help our someone else. My latest delight comes from what W9ILF said above about my tutorial/check sheet system for our NAQCC Alphabet type challenges. Don W2JEK said the same thing. I always did wonder why so many folks thought they were so complicated. I'm glad now I shared my system so they can now see just how easy an alphabet challenge is to track.

  I can't wait now till Wednesday evening for our sprint. I've absolutely fallen in love with the homebrew straight key I designed and built for the sprint. I've only used my bencher paddle and keyer a couple times since I debuted the hb sk, and I completely removed my regular J-38 style straight key from my operating desk.

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.